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I. KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

Add.—Address.

Or.—Original Article.

C. R.—Case Report.

B. M.—Bedside Medicine.

Ed.—Editorial.

M. T.—Medicine Today.

C. N.—Clinical Notes.

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EDITORIALS

A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M. D. DEGREE

In recent years, very considerable discussion has taken place concerning the time and expense involved in securing the degree of M. D. from a Class A medical school.

From the hodgepodge requirements existing prior to the 1909 Flexner and Carnegie Institution reports, our American medical schools jumped to almost the opposite extreme. The jump to idealistic standards would not have been so important to us today, except for the fact that in one state after the other, leaders in our profession made portions of these idealistic medical school education requirements a part of their respective state medical practice laws. Most of the states, as they brought these newer standards into operation, gave themselves additional gratification in their legislative enactments by refusing reciprocity to medical graduates coming from states where equally high idealistic paper and legal standards did not obtain.

* * *

One of the consequences of these newer standards of medical education, which have been put in operation during the last two decades, has been the replacement of the former lesser standard, quite decent and reputable nonsectarian medical schools of the period before the Flexner report, by out-and-out absolutely low standard cultist schools of the healing art. Therefore, so far as public health interests are concerned, there are probably today more practitioners of the healing art (when graduates of both nonsectarian and

sectarian schools of healing are included) than would have come from the nonsectarian schools alone under the system antedating the Flexner report.

It likewise follows that it is questionable whether lay citizens, all classes included, by and large, are getting as safe and as efficient treatment as would have been placed at their service under the old system with its natural developmental improvements. However, our nonsectarian medical school housecleaning was carried on and through in vigorous fashion, and being a thing of the past, it is useless to indulge in much idle speculation thereon. The problems now facing us are: to consider the defects existing in the newer system now in vogue, and to determine how some of these may best be remedied.

* * *

It may be stated that a large number of members of our profession, both in and out of our medical school faculties, were not carried off their feet by the full four years liberal arts undergraduate degree requirement as a very necessary provision in a high standard medical education. Many of these physicians have held from the beginning that a four years high school education, with two years of preliminary liberal arts work in the basic premedical sciences and a four-year medical school training, was an ample average and fair theoretical requirement for the M. D. degree, and a good qualification for eligibility to take an examination for medical licensure.

Many of these colleagues who held to that viewpoint, also believed that the two years thus saved from the four-year college or liberal arts course, could be very well added to the one-year compulsory internship now required, so that the theoretical training would be fortified by a three years internship or clinical or postgraduate practical training at the bedside. Many physicians in practice who have held viewpoints akin to those just indicated have felt that such a system would produce physicians and surgeons measuring up as well or better than those produced under the four-year liberal arts premedical—with only one year internship, system.

* * *

A very interesting article presenting some illuminating facts and opinions, and dealing with this subject, is to be found in the *Journal American Medical Association* of June 2, 1928, page 1812. It comes from a faculty member of the newly established medical school of Duke University at Durham, N. C. The article is by W. C. Davidson, M. D., and has suggestive value for all who are interested in standards of medical education. It is our own belief that the next few years will witness a considerable, organized effort to bring into being in a number of states of the Union what might be called this program of the Duke University School of Medicine.

The standards laid down by Doctor Davidson are common sense, practical standards, capable of producing as good or better graduates than are produced today, and capable of giving as good or better service to the laity. It is to be remembered,